United Nations A/54/222/Add.1

General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 September 1999
English
Original: Spanish

Fifty-fourth session
Item 117 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Human rights and unilateral coercive measures

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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* A/54/150.

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Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[28 June 1999]

1. The Government of the Republic of Cuba attaches great importance to the consideration of this item by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights. For this reason, Cuba has year after year joined the group of States that sponsors this draft resolution in both forums.

2. The unquestionable importance and undeniable validity of this item were reflected in the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at Vienna, which "calls upon States to refrain from any unilateral measure not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that creates obstacles to trade relations among States and impedes the full realization of the rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ..." (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III, para. 31).

3. Such measures have been applied against Cuba for four decades, and the considerable adverse economic and social effects of such practices on our country are reflected in reports (A/48/448 and Add.1, A/49/398 and Add.1, A/50/401 and Add.1 and Corr.1, A/51/355 and Add.1, A/52/342 and Add.1 and Corr.1 and A/53/320 and Adds.1-3) submitted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations under the General Assembly agenda item entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

4. The international community has repeatedly condemned the harmful impact of such measures on trade relations among States and on the full realization and enjoyment of human rights, in particular the right to enjoy a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, including food, health care, housing and basic social services, and the right to development.

5. In Cuba's case, such condemnation has been voiced at the past seven sessions of the General Assembly by a broad and growing majority that has adopted resolutions 47/19, 48/16, 49/9, 50/10, 51/17, 52/10 and 53/4, which deal with the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba.

6. The United States of America has continued to ignore the will of the international community, and is pursuing this arbitrary policy with greater intensity, as reflected in the paragraphs of the Secretary-General's report (A/53/293) that refer to the Helms-Burton Act and other economic sanctions unilaterally imposed by Washington against other countries. Recognized sources in the United States acknowledge that, between 1993 and 1996 alone, the United States enacted 61 sanctions against 35 countries; in addition, 40 pieces of legislation were enacted by state and local governments against a further 18 countries.

7. Cuba firmly believes that, in the present international circumstances, the international community must continue to condemn vigorously the use of such practices and take urgent action to ensure the effective implementation of relevant decisions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.